

Office of Congressman Charles W. Dent
Proudly Representing Pennsylvania's 15th District



For Immediate Release
January 20, 2006

Contact: Gregg W. Bortz
610-861-9734 or (cell) 202-222-5118

Dent, Weldon and Gerlach call on Medicare administrator to improve prescription drug service

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Jan. 19) — Three Republican lawmakers from southeastern Pennsylvania and the Lehigh Valley expressed their concerns to Dr. Mark McClellan, administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), about the problems facing their constituents participating in the new prescription drug program, Medicare Part D, which kicked off on January 1, 2006.

U.S. Reps. Jim Gerlach (PA-06), Curt Weldon (PA-07) and Charlie Dent (PA-15) relayed to McClellan numerous problems their constituents experienced when trying to use the prescription drug program. McClellan insisted that CMS was working very hard to make the necessary improvements and address any outstanding concerns. He also stressed that the process was continuing to improve, as questions and paperwork from beneficiaries are now being addressed in a timelier manner.

“I was pleased to hear some of the ways Dr. McClellan intends to correct some of the snafus that happened in the initial rollout of Medicare D,” Rep. Dent said. “CMS was helpful to my office as we held more than a dozen information meetings for our constituents, and I would expect them to be as responsive to any issues that come up with this new federal program.”

“This new benefit will help millions of our nation’s poorest seniors gain access to lifesaving prescription medications,” Rep. Gerlach said. “However, with any new program, there are bound to be initial problems that need corrected and CMS has assured us that they are working hard at doing just that. Meeting the needs of our seniors is very important to us, and we’ll continue to make sure that CMS works to address any concerns with this benefit.”

“Though Medicare Part D has had many early setbacks, Dr. McClellan assures us he is working through these problems with his staff and participating insurance companies,” said Rep. Weldon. “Many of my constituents have called about serious situations in which they could not get the medicines they needed, and we are working on a case-by-case basis to help them.” Weldon added, “Medicare Part D is a new benefit intended to give seniors more affordable options for their prescriptions and we remain committed to making that happen.”

###